

Now you are a parent

“Solid, you got your little bubba now?”

“Yeah, it’s all over now!”

“Only for now though, then comes feeds at night, nappies, crying, not much sleep; but it’s all going to be worth it eh?”

“Yeah...!”

Having a baby is a big job and looking after a baby is a big job too! Your life will change because you have that little person to think of as well. You will feel love, happiness and pride and you might also feel upset, or anxious and tired.

It can be scary when you realise this little person needs you for everything, especially if you feel you don’t know a lot about babies. Parenting is forever and it isn’t easy at any time. Some people’s parenting ways may be different but we all want the same thing—for our kids to grow up to be healthy, happy, successful, honest, caring and responsible adults.

There will be many things to handle and do in bringing up your precious child, right until they are grown up. You are not expected to be the perfect parent!

Most parents learn things as they go, sometimes by what they were brought up to know, or what they have read somewhere, or seen other people do.

Get to know your baby

Every baby is different, even in the same family. Babies grow and learn faster than at any other time of their life. Your baby is learning lots of things from you.

- Know that your baby needs you to feed her, comfort her, give her warmth and love as well as you can. When you do this she is learning to love you and to trust you.
- Talk to your baby when you change, wash or feed her.
- Make time to have playtime. Touch and play with her gently.
- Let her sleep in a quiet place when she is tired.
- Sing to your baby.
- Never shake a baby—it can cause brain damage.

This tip sheet, along with the full set of Parenting WA guides, is available in electronic format at www.communities.wa.gov.au



These things might help

You are the most important person in your child's life. You have to look after yourself.

- Nobody has all the answers but asking around can give you extra ideas. Talk to other mums and dads.
- Get to know about things in your area like playgrounds. Visit local child care centres. Get involved.
- Find out how kids grow and develop.
- It's okay to get someone you know and trust to mind your baby for a little while if you are feeling tired, stressed or worried. Just make sure you have left everything your baby will need like his food, milk, nappies. Let the person babysitting know where you are and when you'll be back.
- Every parent gets angry at some time and you might feel that you're 'losing it'. You might feel that everything is on top of you—the kids are playing up and you just don't know what to do and you get mad.
- Getting angry is a normal and healthy emotion. It becomes a problem when we are not able to manage it.
- **The important thing is to admit you are angry and deal with it in a way that won't hurt your family.**
- When you think you're getting to that point where you might do something that you'll feel sorry about later, get rid of your tension. Everyone has different ways to do this:
 - some people talk to themselves like "Stop! Calm down and take 10 deep breaths" or "I've got to stop what I'm doing and count to 20".
 - others walk away or go for a run around the block. Some put on music and dance around the room.
- Getting outside and getting fresh air can help. But make sure you have put your kids in a safe place first. If you have very young children and no-one can mind them, take them with you.
- Some find talking to someone to 'get it off their chest' can be helpful but you need to feel you can trust that person.
- If you have a lot of anger that is still with you from your own childhood or things that have happened to you, it is important to be free from 'old' anger. This may mean you need to get help from others.
- Get ideas and support from your parents, grandparents and other family members and friends. You could also ask your local doctor or health workers as well as Elders.

Parenting is a full-time job—forever.
It's one of the most important and hardest jobs you can do.



Contacts

Parenting WA Line

A free 24/7 telephone information and support service for parents and children pre-birth to 18 years.

t: 1800 654 432 (free call)

w: www.communities.wa.gov.au

Department for Communities Aboriginal Early Years – Best Start Program

Best Start is a state-wide program for Aboriginal parents and carers with young children from babies to five years old. Best Start Services are located in the following areas:

- Armadale t: 08 9399 6489
- Carnarvon t: 08 9941 2105
- Goldfields t: 08 9093 3795
- Hedland t: 08 9172 3599
- Mandurah t: 08 9583 9802
- Marble Bar t: 0427 013 144
- Midland t: 08 9274 9411
- Moora t: 08 9651 1294
- Mullewa t: 0408 844 196
- Narrogin t: 08 9881 6693
- Roebourne t: 0438 926 558
- South Lake t: 0427 013 141

w: www.communities.wa.gov.au

Ngala Helpline

Provides parenting information, strategies and referral to community resources for parents regarding early parenting concerns and direction to all other Ngala services.

t: (08) 9368 9368 Helpline

t: 1800 111 546 (country callers)

w: www.ngala.com.au

The Raising Children Network

Helps parents with the day-to-day decisions of raising children and looking after their own needs.

w: www.raisingchildren.net.au

Pregnancy, Birth and Baby Helpline

A telephone and internet support service providing general information about pregnancy, birthing, post-natal care and parenting in the first 12 months.

t: 1800 882 436

w: www.healthdirect.org.au/pbb

Health Direct

Offers a health telephone helpline.

t: 1800 022 222

w: www.healthdirect.org.au

This Guide uses 'he' and 'she' in turn. Change to suit your child's sex.

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